693
613

night in the *etambo* praying to or communing with ancestral spirits, when the occasion arises; Suku is regarded as too remote to receive prayers.

782

While cooking, a woman may spill a little meal on the ground for the spirits; at a meal, a person may spill a little food or beer for the same purpose. A portion of the meat at a feast may likewise be sacrificed, but it is often a less desirable portion, such as the intestines.(1)

241
789

Agricultural rituals were held before planting, at which time the headman and his wife had intercourse in their field and sacred seed from the chief's granary was distributed, a few grains to be mixed with the seed to be planted on each plot. When the maize began to ripen a few ears were sent to the chief before any were eaten.(2)

DIVINERS(3)

791
759

The word *ocimbanda* is used both for a diviner and for a maker of medicines. To distinguish the two, the diviner may be called *ocimbanda congombo* ("of the basket"), the herbalist *ocimbanda coviti* ("of trees or sticks"). Some practitioners are both diviner and herbalist. A female diviner is called *cambula*.(4) An *ocimbanda* frequently specialises in a certain kind of case;(5) and among the members of the profession there are many degrees of proficiency. One may work only in his own village, another may be consulted on matters of concern to the whole district or chiefdom; others go on professional journeys carrying their baskets, and accumulate profits in animals and cloth. The greater the reputation of the diviner, the greater the charges he makes for his services.

The tasks of the *ocimbanda* are:-

787
753

(a) To discover the cause of sickness, death, or any evil which has befallen the individual or the community. Sickness and death are always believed to be due either to the workings of spirits who are demanding sacrifices, or to living enemies who have malicious spirits under their control or who have bought potent charms. The diviner, after consulting the spirit who speaks in and through his basket, names the spirit who is causing the trouble and tells the victim what its demands are, or, if the enemy is a living person, indicates in a general manner from whence the trouble comes, e.g. to a woman "Your baskets are too well made; you are hated because of them", or, to a man, "This illness was found on a journey taken to collect a debt". If requested, the diviner makes a counter-charm to offset that which has caused the ill.

(b) To interpret omens and dreams.

(c) To give advice on personal problems.

(d) To dispense medicines and charms.

(e) To bring or withhold rain, or to see who is guilty of withholding it. [789]

(1) Ibid., see also Cashmore, loc.cit.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) Based on Tucker, 1940.
(4) Bentley, (2) 1934.
(5) Ibid.

775 suffers sickness or misfortune if an ancestral spirit dies a second death. A person who has bad health says, "The spirit of my grandfather has been caught by *Esuvi*." The name of the good spirit *Osande* is used by a person who is suffering. Such a one says, "I have no more *Osande*." These instances clearly reveal a belief in the dependence of human welfare on the interest of benevolent ancestral spirits.

775 791 753 After a lapse of three months I asked Ngonga again about *Osande* and *Ondele*. He confirmed what he had previously said, but spoke in the plural of these spirits; good spirits are called *Olosande*, bad spirits are called *Olondele*. The medicine-man will visit a hut to foretell the future, and while there he puts a concoction in an image to which he addresses questions. He plugs his nostrils, then in a falsetto voice feigns answers from the image. The father of a family, or possibly the mother's brother, may kill an animal in front of the hut on this occasion. He then says to *Olosande*, "We hope when [161] we kill this there will be no more sickness." The Ovimbundu are afraid of death, and they therefore sacrifice to *Olosande*, asking that there shall be no death in the family.

775 I do not know whether the Ovimbundu distinguish multiple souls as some Negro tribes do. The part of a man which does not die is sometimes called *utima*, which is the word for heart. Dr. M. W. Ennis says that the *utima* and the *omuenyo* are both names of the spirit existing in a living body. Ngonga seems certain that every person irrespective of age, rank, and sex has a spirit, but I could find no evidence that the Ovimbundu visualize a separation of ranks or sexes after death. When a man kills himself he is buried 762 near a river so that his spirit will go to the sea, and for the same 775 reason a murdered man is buried near a river. At Ngalangi I inquired from other Ovimbundu people concerning suicide. Women who commit suicide generally do so by hanging or drowning. Men stab themselves in the heart or use a flintlock gun, the trigger of which they pull with their toes. It is feared that the spirit of a suicide will return to induce another suicide in the family, therefore there is anxiety to rid the community of these spirits.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CONDUCT

771 688 The Ovimbundu have many high standards of conduct, some of which have been mentioned in dealing with the education of children. There is, however, no idea of sin. That is to say, there are no commands laid down by some authority which is more than human.